

Rules for Debates

PHI 300
(Erion)

1. Proponents should choose a *clear* and *definitive* formulation of their thesis and communicate this thesis to their opponents, so that all debaters are aware of the precise claim under investigation. This thesis should also be clear to your *audience*, of course, so be sure to state it as you begin, and then again during and at the conclusion of your presentation.
2. Clearly *identify any theoretical foundations* that your arguments employ (i.e., utilitarianism, Kantianism, virtue ethics, etc.).
3. Remember to stay focused on the *arguments* for and against your thesis; examples and personal experiences should be introduced only when they enhance the strength or clarity of your arguments. *Avoid ad hominem personal attacks*; attacking the person making a claim instead of the claim itself is a logical fallacy.
4. Attempt to *anticipate objections* to your ideas so that you can address them effectively during your presentation.
5. Speak clearly and loudly, and convince your audience that you believe what you say. You should also try to preserve a clear distinction between your views and those of your opposition.
6. Feel free to use *visual aids* (chalkboard, overhead, handouts, etc.) to make your arguments as clear and convincing as possible.